

BEACONSFIELD URBAN DISTRICT.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting to you for consideration my Tenth Annual Report on the Sanitary condition and general health of the town for the year ending December 31st, 1910.

The Report has been worked out on the general lines laid down by the Local Government Board Memorandum for the year, but dealing especially with matters concerning your district.

The birth-rate, although below the average of the past nine years, being highest in 1901 and lowest in 1906, compares favourably with the general birth-rate of the Country, which, as everyone knows and regrets, is gradually decreasing.

The Infantile Mortality is unfortunately high, but we may congratulate ourselves on a low general death-rate; the majority of deaths registered being under one year and over sixty-five years of age, there being an excess of males over females by five.

Moreover, there has not been a single death from any of the Infectious diseases, which, I think, speaks volumes for the general health of the town, and we may justly be styled The Brighton of Bucks.

We have during the past year made considerable progress in sanitary matters by additional connections of house drains to main sewer and provision of more flushing W.C.'s to Cottage property in the old town, and the extension of Main Sewer northwards with means of provision for connecting to the New Roads Sewers and new out-flow to Sewage Grounds in the future when increasing population demands and the position of the treasury permits.

The Roadways and Paths are gradually being put into proper conformation worthy of this world-famed ancient district of Beaconsfield.

The Lighting of the town is gradually being improved, and the Water Supply is good.

The usual commodities, food, meat, &c., exposed for sale, have been found of good quality, and there has been no occasion to take any action under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts or Public Health Act, 1875.

There have been very few nuisances reported to me by your Inspector during the year and none remain unabated.

We have no Workshops, Underground Bakehouses, &c., coming under the Act, neither are there any offensive trades carried on in the district.

The Memorandum of the Local Government Board *re* diphtheria anti-toxin has been adopted by you and a supply of anti-toxin is in my hands for the use of practitioners on patients unable to afford it or in cases of great emergency.

I advise that a proper register of dairy, cowsheds, and retailers of milk be kept by your Inspector and that a regular inspection of cattle (*i.e.* Milch Cows) be made by a duly qualified Veterinary Surgeon.

I will now pass on to the more detailed part of the Report.

Vital Statistics, &c.

1. Population estimated to the middle of the year gives a population of 2,296, but, as I have said before, is variable and inadequate with the present methods we have at our disposal.

Next year (1911) being Census year, we shall have an accurate basis.

- 2. Death-rate--estimated per 1,000 population--6.53.
- 3. Birth-rate--estimated per 1,000 population--23.56.
- 4. Infantile Mortality--estimated per 1000 births--129.

Table of Deaths at Different Ages.

Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	7 deaths.
1 year and under 5 years	...	...	...	...	nil „
5 years and under 15 years	...	...	...	...	nil „
15 years and under 25 years	...	...	...	...	1 „
25 years and under 65 years	...	...	...	...	1 „
65 years and over	...	...	...	...	6 „

The respective ages of the last group being 67, 69, 69, 70, 72, and 83, giving an average age of 71²/₃ years.

Seven of the deaths were children under one year. One death was a lad of 17 years from meningitis, and another aged 58 years from cardiac disease.

None of the deaths registered were due to infectious disease.

Out of the 15 deaths, 10 were males and 5 females. There were no deaths in the months of January, February, July, September, and October.

An inquest and post-mortem was held on a child of four days, and death was found to be due to an abnormal condition of the heart, liver and spleen, one kidney was absent.

In reference to the holding of inquests, and more especially where a post-mortem is required, as I pointed out at an inquest some time ago, and other medical men have done so since, the necessity for a Mortuary where the body, as often happens in cases of sudden death, a stranger in a land of strangers, can be taken.

Moreover two other points are strong evidence to my mind of this need.

- 1. The difficulty of finding a place to take the corpse. The most usual place being licensed premises, through the courtesy of the landlord of the house, for which accommodating act he is not too well paid, considering it dislocates his business for one and often more days.
- 2. The making of post-mortems at the house of the deceased or his relatives, which must be a great trial to them, to say nothing of the mess, however careful one may be, and the entrance and exit of officials, and twelve true and worthy subjects of His Majesty, who will an unbiased verdict give.

Table of Deaths in each Month.

Months.	Deaths.	Males.	Females.	Months,	Deaths.	Males.	Females.
January	nil	...	...	July	nil	...	...
February	nil	...	...	August	1	1	...
March	2	2	...	September ...	nil	...	...
April	4	3	1	October	nil	...	...
May	3	2	1	November ...	3	1	2
June	1	1	...	December ...	1	...	1

Table of Causes of Death with Ages.

Causes of Death.	Number.				Age.
Tuberculosis intestines	1	...	7 months	
Bronchitis	2	...	3 months	69 years.
Premature Birth	2	...	7½ hours & 1½ hours	
Diabetes	1	...		69 years.
Gangrene	1	...		67 years.
Broncho-Pneumonia	1	...	6 months	
Gastro-enteritis	1	...	3½ months	
Meningitis	1	...		17 years.
Heart Disease	2	...		70 & 58 years.
Nephritis	1	...		72 years.
Senile Debility	1	...		83 years.
Abnormal condition of organs	1	...	4 days	

Table of Births in each Month.

Months.	Births.	Males.		Females.		Months.	Births.	Males.		Females.	
January	6	...	2	...	4	July	4	...	1	...	3
February ...	4	...	1	...	3	August	5	...	2	...	3
March	3	...	3	...	—	September ...	3	...	1	...	2
April	7	...	5	...	2	October	1	...	—	...	1
May	5	...	3	...	2	November ...	3	...	2	...	1
June	7	...	3	...	4	Dccember ...	6	...	3	...	3

Total for the year being 54—26 males and 28 females.

Drainage, Sewage, &c.

A distinct advancement has been made by the installation of a new sewer from the old town down the Station and Penn Roads with connections ready for joining up with the several new roads, when completed by the property holders, so that in due course to complete the new system and drain to the north-western outflow and Sewage Farm for which ground has already been acquired. This work has been carried out as also the making up of the Station and Penn Roads by Messrs. Langley and Johnson of Slough, under the supervision of your Surveyor (Mr. Sargeant) and Mr. MacGregor.

With the increasing growth of the town towards the north I trust the time will not be far distant when you will be in a position to complete the whole system and thereby do away with cesspools. These have been emptied at regular intervals, or when found necessary, by the sewage van which when under the control of your Surveyor and his men acted adequately and satisfactorily.

But as I have reported before, certain cesspits are badly constructed or used for the reception of water from roofs &c. as well as the collection of matter for which they were intended.

A considerable number of the remaining cottages in the old town with automatic flushing, brick built w.c.'s also a few more houses have been connected with the old system.

Having in so many annual reports brought this subject forward I trust by the end of the coming year there will not be a single cottage or house not connected.

The collection of house refuse has been carried out regularly and satisfactorily by the Council's Scavenger.

The blocking of drains and sewer by rags and other foreign bodies has been brought to your notice many times during the past ten years, and it seems a disgrace to certain of the inhabitants that this should occur, as it is quite certain these foreign bodies cannot get into the sewer by any fair means and I consider should the offenders be caught they should be dealt with by the utmost rigour of the law in your power.

Roads, Paths, &c.

There has been decided improvement made in this direction during the year.

The surface and general condition of Candlemas Lane, Amersham Road, Ledboro Lane have been greatly improved and made up.

The Station and Penn Roads being a marked advancement being thoroughly metalled, channelled, curbed, &c. with a good footpath which enhances the comfort of both visitors and residents in the district, besides giving importance to what will be in the future the main road of the town.

Hedges, &c.

In the district have in most cases been considerably trimmed and this is most important in places and corners, which are decidedly dangerous to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Moreover, the ever increasing motor traffic, not only on the Main, but also the Bye Roads requires the obliteration of the dangerous hedges and corners.

The cleansing, cleaning out, and deepening of ditches, has and is being carried out in an adequate manner.

Lighting of the Town has also been much improved by the addition of several new lamps. The most noteworthy being the one on the Railway Bridge, another at the Eastern End of London Road, and a third on the Broadway.

The Water Supply by the Amersham, Beaconsfield and District Water Company continues of good force, quantity, and quality.

Housing, &c.

The building of better class houses in the district and their gradual increase in number must of necessity, as I have pointed out before, require a proportionate increase in cottage property, but the difficulty is to provide good hygienic, well-built cottages at a weekly rental to suit the pockets of the would-be occupier.

The House Planning Act has not been yet adopted.

Cow Sheds.

These have been visited at regular intervals during the year, and in most cases found in a cleanly, good, and satisfactory condition.

The Sheds are limewashed at regular periods or when found desirable.

The men engaged in milking operations are provided with towels and water to clean their hands.

The cows are put out to graze and brought in for daily milking ; in winter they sleep in sheds at night. The cattle as far as I could judge seemed in good healthy condition and in most instances their udders were in a cleanly state.

This brings before your notice a point which is very much on the ^{tapin} ~~tape~~ at the present time, i.e., the question of Periodical Veterinary inspection of cattle, especially milch cows.

As you are no doubt aware Bucks and some of the surrounding counties send large quantities of milk to London for consumption, but a certain quantity is sold in this town, which comes from farms outside your district and therefore not under my immediate supervision.

A pure milk supply is of the highest importance to the community and as far as I can ascertain it is so in this district.

I believe the Board of Agriculture require a standard of not less than 12 per cent. of cream.

This is not the most important point, but the danger of conveyance by milk of infectious and contagious diseases and especially tuberculosis from infected cows which cannot always be detected by general observation, but require to be examined and tested by an expert Veterinary Surgeon.

Pig Styes, &c.

These have been inspected and orders to owners to keep them in a proper and cleanly condition, where these instructions were not carried out, or the styes too near to dwelling house or dairy, orders were given to remove the nuisance.

The Slaughter-house has been found in excellent condition, cleanly, regularly lime-washed, and with a good supply of water.

The Bake-houses in the district have been visited and found kept in good, cleanly condition, limewashed when required, and the floors and walls in good structural repair, and provided with modern apparatus for the production of their various commodities.

Vaccination.

It is deeply to be regretted that the number of primary vaccinations is gradually falling off throughout the country. No one but those in authority with a large experience of the value of the relationship between small-pox and vaccination can realise what this means should an epidemic of small-pox break out. The papers of so-called conscientious objectors at the present day being signed up when the majority of these applicants' only objection is a few restless nights with the infant, without caring one iota for the possible results in the future. Should small-pox occur in the town, it would be a great difficulty to vaccinate the whole of the unvaccinated in the short time which would be at our disposal; not only from the point of practice but obtaining the large quantities of lymph which would be required.

I feel that many magistrates have and are filling up these papers without the slightest thought of the possibilities and terrible dangers of the morrow.

It is to be hoped they will give this subject more careful thought, and remember, although we are gradually advancing to a high state of hygiene, this will not alone save us from the terrible scourge of a century ago. Moreover, it is not reasonable to lightly cast aside a prophylactic treatment, which has taken years of the lives of some of our most eminent medical men to bring to perfection, when that treatment, under the present methods, has been proved to be most efficient both in operation and protection.

Tuberculosis.

As far as can be ascertained there are very few cases of phthisis in the district but the exact number is impossible to obtain, as only persons coming under the Poor Law Notification Act of 1908 can be traced and this in many districts is worse than useless for as I have before remarked what is the good of notification of these cases without the means of proper adequate treatment, general improvement of surroundings, and isolation from healthy members of the family.

Many suggestions have from time to time been brought to one's notice, sanatoria, hospitals, revolving huts, tents, &c. All these are expensive methods of treatment and in most instances beyond the pale of cottage life of rural England, unless some open-handed person will provide the ^{other} ~~there~~ with all to procure it, or local Sanitary Authority is able to speculate in this direction.

Then on the other hand, should it be the house wife infected and she is removed, what is to become of the husband and children?

Under the existing circumstances I advise plenty of open air when the weather will permit, gentle exercise short of fatigue, the carrying out of the pamphlet drawn up by the County Medical Officer, one of which I give to each case coming under my notice. And impress on the patient the necessity for the greatest care as to expectoration &c.

The general medical treatment of the different stages and complications of the disease.

Distribution of Cod Liver Oil to cases unable to afford to buy it.

The use of disinfectants in the house, and in the event of death, the general disinfection of bedding, clothes, and house, and the destruction of personal clothes, and in some instances bedding.

In October a case of tubercular peritonitis at the Convalescent Home in the High-street, became worse and was sent back to Hospital for further treatment. I considered it best in this case to destroy by fire the bedding, &c. used by the child as they had been soiled by discharges.

The problem of the best methods for stamping out this terrible disease is a most difficult one. It means the compulsory notification of all classes, no matter what sphere of life and the compulsory treatment in sanatoria or isolation from healthy subjects.

Respiratory Diseases have not been very prevalent during the year, although during the last month there was, as might be expected, considerable increase in cases. As may be seen by the causes of death table, only three cases proved fatal, and two of those were under one year old.

Influenza has been somewhat prevalent throughout the year, but fortunately few of the cases have been of a serious type. Most seem to have affected the Alimentary tract causing sickness, diarrhoea, and colic, pains with depression, and weakness.

None of the cases were fatal.

Erysipelas.—One case has been notified during the year.

Scarlet Fever.—Two cases have been notified, one of which, after due investigation, was found not to have been one, it having been wrongly diagnosed by the medical attendant as he himself owned, this brings the total for the year to one.

Whooping Cough.—During the month of May a considerable number of cases occurred and at various intervals, during the year isolated cases have, from time to time, developed.

There have also been a few cases of measles, but as neither of these diseases are notifiable in the district, it is impossible to give any accurate account as to severity or number.

Methods of dealing with Infectious Diseases.

1. Isolation at home, when it is found safe and possible to do so.
2. Instructions to other persons in the house not to mix with others.
3. Removal to Isolation Hospital when unable to isolate at home.
4. Storing of diphtheritic anti-toxin by the Council, to be used by practitioners in the town, if patient cannot afford it, or in cases of emergency.
5. Disinfection of house, clothing, bedding, &c., followed with instructions to re-paper, whitewash, &c.
6. Weekly returns of infectious diseases in the district to the County Medical Officer and Local Government Board.
7. List of infected areas from the County M.O.H. and L.G.B.

These lists are very helpful, as one can look out for infection from infected areas and trace, or perhaps prevent, an epidemic in one's own district.

An enquiry *re* Conjoint Isolation Hospital Scheme for South Bucks was held at Slough, on March 10th, 1910, when the different representatives, for the several districts included, gave evidence. And it was practically agreed by all of them not to join the Scheme, but that it would be better to add to their existing Hospitals or build one for their own district in cases where there was not such a building.

Plague and Rats.

On December 14th some rats were brought to me having swellings about the neck and jaw. The man stated " he had caught about ten during the week and in some cases a discharge had come from the swellings. His dog, a good ratter, did not seem to like attacking these particular rats." These rats I forwarded with the usual notice, to the Medical Officer, Local Government Board, sealed in an air-tight metal box, for examination for plague, in accordance with the Local Government Board Memorandum, dated November, 1910. The Brothers Hamilton, rat-catchers, of Slough, have caught over 1,300, nearly half of them having swellings about the neck or body.

On December 16th I received a telegram from the Medical Officer, Local Government Board, stating that the result of examination for pestis proved negative.

I have had no further report, neither have any more diseased rats been brought to me.

Table of Population for last 10 Years with Births and Deaths.

Year.	Population.	Births.	Deaths.	Year.	Population.	Births.	Deaths.
1901	... 1570	... 84	... 37	1906	... 1660	... 38	... 11
1902	... 1584	... 40	... 26	1907	... 1674	... 43	... 23
1903	... 1594	... 49	... 21	1908	... 1704	... 51	... 24
1904	... 1617	... 40	... 30	1909	... 1738	... 62	... 20
1905	... 1631	... 42	... 21	1910	... 2296	... 54	... 15

Appended is the Inspector of Nuisances Report for the year, required by the County Medical Officer, and I take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Sargeant for his valuable assistance.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR H. TURNER,

Medical Officer of Health, Beaconsfield Urban District.

LEIGH HOUSE,
BEACONSFIELD,

March 14th, 1911.

Buckinghamshire County Council.

Summary of work done through the Sanitary Inspector in the Urban District of Beaconsfield during the year ending 31st December, 1910.

I. Nuisances.

1. Complaints received	...	...	...	...	1
2. Nuisances detected without complaint	...	...	...	...	4
3. Nuisances abated	...	...	...	...	5
4. Notices served	...	...	...	...	2
5. Summonses taken out	...	...	...	...	None
6. Convictions	...	...	...	...	"

II. Houses.

7. Houses and premises inspected	...	...	...	...	13
8. Overcrowding abated	...	...	...	...	None
9. Houses closed	...	...	...	...	"
10. Closing orders becoming operative	...	...	...	...	"
11. Houses placed in habitable repair	...	...	...	...	"
12. Defects remedied without closing orders	...	...	...	...	"
13. Defects remedied after closing orders	...	...	...	...	"
14. Dirty houses cleansed	...	...	...	...	6
15. Closing orders determined	...	...	...	...	None
16. Houses represented as unfit for habitation	...	...	...	...	"

III. Drains, W.C.'s, Privies, &c.

17. Defects found	...	...	...	...	17
18. Cleansed, repaired, re-laid, ventilated or constructed	...	...	...	...	—
19. Earth, pail closets or privies constructed	...	...	...	...	17
20. Privies and w.c.'s repaired	...	...	...	...	—
21. W.c.'s supplied with water	...	...	...	...	17

IV. Water Supply.

22.	Houses connected with water mains	...	...	...	5
23.	Cisterns cleansed, repaired, &c.	...	...	...	—
24.	Samples taken for analysis	...	...	...	None
25.	Wells cleansed and repaired	...	...	...	"
26.	Wells closed	...	...	...	1
27.	" Certificates " granted	} For Rural Districts only			—
28.	" Certificates " deferred				

V. Food.

29. Seizure of unsound meat	None
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VI. Slaughter Houses.

30. Number on register	1
31. Number of inspections	14
32. Number of defects found	None
33. Number of cleansed, limewashed, repaired, etc.	...	...	...	...	—

VII. Bakehouses.

34.	Number on register	...	...	...	...	3
35.	Number of inspections	...	...	...	...	42
36.	Number of defects found	...	...	...	...	None
37.	Number of cleansed, limewashed, repaired, etc.	...	...	...	...	—

VIII. Dairies, Cowsheds, & Milkshops.

38.	Number of dairy men or purveyors of milk on register	...	...	...	...	3
39.	Number of ditto, registered during the year	...	...	...	...	—
40.	Number of cowkeepers on register	...	...	...	...	3
41.	Number of cowkeepers registered during the year	...	...	...	...	1
42.	Number of visits made	...	...	...	...	24
43.	Number of notices issued <i>re</i> cleansing, water supply, and sanitary defects	...	...	...	...	None

IX. Workshops.

44.	Number on register	...	...	...	...	None
45.	Number of inspections	...	...	...	...	—
46.	Number of defects found	...	...	...	...	—
47.	Number of notices served, <i>re</i> cleansing, overcrowding, sanitary defects, &c.	...	...	...	...	—

X. Various.

48.	Removal of animals improperly kept	...	...	...	...	—
49.	Visits to infected houses	...	...	...	...	2
50.	Houses disinfected	...	...	...	...	2

Remarks.

District is remarkably free from Nuisances, the majority of the property being in the hands of large landowners who exercise good supervision.

H. SARGEANT,
Inspector of Nuisances.

1910.

BEACONSFIELD
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report
OF
Medical Officer of Health.

With Dr. Turners Compliments.

C. LUFF, PRINTER, SLOUGH.